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ABSTRACT

The annual report describes the 1976-1977 activities of Connecticut's Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a statewide coordinating agency. Discussed are the following aspects of the Commission: population served, interpretive services, counseling and referral, and job development and placement. It is stated that the Commission, in its 3 years of existence, has developed a nationwide reputation for quality services to deaf and hard of hearing persons. (CL)

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HEARING
IMPAIRED
ANNUAL REPORT, 1976-1977

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To: The Honorable Ella T. Grasso, Governor
From: State Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired
Barbara B. Brasel, Executive Director, Gloria White, Chairperson

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED

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COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND

HEARING IMPAIRED

Barbara Babbini Brasel, Executive Director

Established-1974. Statutory authority-Sections 17-137k through 137r,

General Statutes

Central Office-40 Woodland Street, Hartford, 06105

Average number of full-time employees-11 General Fund, 2 Federal.

Recurring operating expenditures, 1976-77, \$167,601

Capital outlay, None

The Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired was established on July 1, 1974 by authority of Section 17-137k-r of the General Statutes. The majority of the staff was hired subsequent to January 31, 1975, at which date the Commission began actual operation as an agency with the appointment of Mrs. Barbara B. Brasel as Executive Director.

THE COMMISSION

The Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired is composed of 19 members, ten of whom are specified by statute, and nine of whom are appointed by the governor. The commissioners elect their own officers; set the policies of the agency; and select an executive director who is responsible for implementing said policies, appointing staff members under State Personnel regulations, and administering agency operation. The commissioners serve staggered four-year terms without pay. In 1976-1977, the commissioners were: ex-officio members: consultant appointed by the State Board of Education in accordance with section 10-316a of the General Statutes; president of the Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf; the superintendent of the Mystic Oral School and the

superintendent of the American School for the Deaf. Voting members of the Commission are: the Commissioners of Health, Social Services, Mental Health, and Labor; the Secretary of State Board of Education; the Deputy Commissioner of Health on Mental Retardation; and nine members appointed by the Governor for terms varying from one to four years although the Reorganization of State Government Act makes all terms coterminous with the Governor's. These are: Dr. Harry Haines, a licensed otolaryngologist; Ms. Barbara Johnson (Secretary of the Commission), a parent of a student in Mystic Oral School; Rev. Raynor Andersen, a parent of a student at the American School for the Deaf; Ms. Kit Northup (Vice Chairperson of the Commission), a parent of a student in a public program for the hearing impaired; and four deaf persons: Donald J. LaRoche; Edmund Cassetti; Ms. Gloria White (Chairperson of the Commission); and Bruce Wydallis. There was one vacancy on the Commission which is in the process of being filled by a governor-appointed deaf or hearing impaired person. In addition to the 19 commissioners, the Educational Services Consultant appointed by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (ERS) serves as liaison between the ERS and the Commission.

PURPOSE

The Commission was created as a statewide coordinating agency to advocate, strengthen and implement state policies affecting deaf and hearing impaired individuals and their relationship to the public, industry, health care, and educational opportunity. The agency provides both direct and indirect (through referrals) services to deaf and hearing impaired clients of the state.

POPULATION TO BE SERVED

According to a nationwide census conducted by the National Association of the Deaf and reported in 1974, Connecticut has approximately 200,000 deaf and

CONNECTICUT STATE COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED
Service Data and Per Cent of Increase by Year,
Feb. 1, 1975 through June 30, 1977

DIRECT SERVICE

	Fiscal year ending 6/30			% Increase from	
	1975	1976	1977	'75 to '76	'76 to '77
<u>Clients Served per mo.</u>					
Interpreting	26.6	51.6	287.3	110.0	412.0
Counseling & Referral ^a	69.2	95.8	165.5	38.4	72.8
Direct Counseling	na	42.3	81.6	na	92.9
Job Program	na	53.5	83.9	na	56.8
Total Clients Served per mo.	99.4	147.4	452.8	48.3	207.2

Services Provided per mo.

Interpreting	123.4	136.4	191.1	10.5	40.1
Counseling & Referral ^a	92.4	171.8	346.1	85.9	101.5
Direct Counseling	na	126.3	178.3	36.7	41.2
Job Program	na	120.8	167.8	na	38.9
Counseling	na	75.3	117.0	na	55.4
On-Job Problems	na	40.5	44.1	na	0.9
(Communication)	na	(31.8)	(34.5)	na	0.8
(Other Problems)	na	(13.0)	(9.6)	na	-32.7
Placements	na	4.7	6.6	na	40.4
Total Services Provided per mo.	215.8	308.3	537.2	42.9	74.2

INDIRECT SERVICE

<u>Information & Referral</u>	358.2	1220.0	1597.5	240.6	30.9 ^b
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na= not applicable

^aIncluded all types of counseling. No break down possible for 1975 as job program was new in late 1975.

^bLimited by availability of phone lines. All three lines constantly in use.

hearing impaired individuals. Of the total, approximately 25,000 are profoundly deaf, and the remainder suffer a degree of hearing loss sufficient for it to effect their lives to some extent. The distribution of deaf and hearing impaired by age group (projected from national incidence) would be 34.2% under age 25; 14.2% between age 25 and 45; 22.5% between 45 and 65 years of age; and 29.1% over 65 years of age.

CLIENTS SERVED AND TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED

The accompanying table shows the number of client contacts made per month by agency staff, and the types of services provided. It must be noted at this point that each month during 1976-77, particularly the last four months of Fiscal '77, saw an increase in the number of both direct and indirect client contacts as well as the number of services provided. The averages per month given in the table are for the total year although the averages for the last six months showed a rate of increase that bordered on the astronomical insofar as interpreting clients were concerned (412.0%). Unlike 1975-76, approximately 50.0 per cent of the first-time clients became "repeaters" in that they required more than one type of service (or repeated provisions of the same service), with the average number of services per client being 3.7 for all services. The average caseload per full time professional staff member (those having direct interface with the clients) was a staggering 497 each, not including the interpreting clients (607.7 with the interpreting clients).

INTERPRETING SERVICE

The Commission's interpreting service showed a marked increase in both the number of clients served (412.0 per cent) and number of times interpreting service was provided (40.1 per cent), with the last four months of the fiscal

year accounting for the sharpest rise. During the first eight months of the year, an average of 170.3 clients were provided with 166.1 services per month — but this increased sharply during the last four months to an average of 531.3 clients per month provided with 241.0 services. It should also be noted at this point that in each interpreting assignment, there was at least one hearing "client" involved as well as the deaf person(s) who benefited from the service in that it permitted the hearing person to communicate with the deaf person as well as vice versa. Although the hearing persons involved were not tallied as "clients", it is demonstrable that the agency is serving at least twice as many individuals as would appear from the data.

Part of the sharp increase in number of clients served was an artifact resulting from improved record keeping initiated in October, 1976. Whereas previous to October, the agency tallied only the client making the initial request for the service, regardless of the number of deaf persons involved in a single assignment, subsequent to October, the actual number of deaf persons served in any given assignment was recorded. Interestingly enough, it was found that an average of 2.2 deaf persons were served for every assignment although the number ranged from 1 to 120. Quite often, also, more than one interpreter was required for an assignment, particularly for conferences and workshops lasting several hours. (Research has shown that a sign language interpreter can interpret continuously only for about 30 minutes at a time before fatigue begins to affect performance negatively unless rest periods are provided. Day-long conferences and workshops, therefore, require several interpreters who can rotate the task among themselves and therefore avoid excessive fatigue.)

The Commission helped initiate two courses in interpreting, one at Southern Connecticut Community College, and one at UConn. In addition, several workshops

were held for both staff and outside interpreters, to help upgrade interpreters' skills. One such workshop was a workshop on serving deaf-blind individuals which was co-sponsored by the Commission, the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults. One of the benefits accruing to interpreters was actual experience in interpreting for the deaf-blind consultants brought in for the conference, an experience few of them had ever had before. It also marked the first time the Commission and BESB worked closely and cooperatively in an effort to upgrade services to clients whose dual handicaps of deafness and blindness give rise to needs that cannot be fully met by either agency working alone, but must be met by a cooperative effort on the part of both agencies.

Among types of situations in which deaf persons needed interpreters, the largest number of calls (18.1 per cent) were for interpreters for educational situations (college, adult and continuing education classes, mainstreaming of deaf students into public schools, etc.). Legal situations (courts, arrests, conferences with attorneys, interrogations, etc.) generated the second highest percentage of calls (13.0 per cent), followed by medical (including open heart surgery, childbirth, etc., 11.3 per cent), professional meetings (10.7 per cent), employment-related (9.4 per cent), welfare and social services (8.8 per cent), community participation (town council and zoning board meetings, PTA meetings, etc., 7.6 per cent), vocational rehabilitation (5.2 per cent), mental health (psychiatric counseling, in-patient and out-patient therapy, commitment hearings, etc., 5.0 per cent); and, finally, as deaf citizens become more aware of their rights as voters, political situations (public hearings on legislation, conferences with legislators, etc., 3.8 per cent).

Problems encountered by the agency in providing interpreter service fell into three categories. First, the agency was hard pressed to keep up with the demand, which kept rising month by month. It is anticipated that this increase will escalate as the impact of Federal Law 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 begin to make themselves felt. As matters stand at present, few schools and agencies have funds for interpreter service, to make programs accessible to the state's hearing-handicapped, so it is likely that the Commission will have to step into the breach and provide the interpreter service necessary to comply with the Federal laws regarding program accessibility.

Second, with the increased demand for interpreting service has come a need for additional interpreters. The Commission has been endeavoring to locate, train and recruit new interpreters as fast as possible, but it is unlikely that the supply of new interpreters will catch up with the demand for at least another year or two -- which is why the UConn and South Central Community College programs are important. Northwest Conn. Community College also offers classes in interpreting, however, but the main thrust of their classes appears to be one of training classroom (educational) interpreter-tutors rather than general interpreters, and it is likely that these trainees will need further training in areas other than educational interpreting if they are to be utilized by the Commission at some future date.

The third area in which problems continue to arise is the lack of awareness on the part of many town clerks -- and even justices -- of the existence of Sections 17-137k and p (as amended by Public Act 77-458). A resolution to this chronic problem would appear to be for a general letter to be sent from the office of the Chief Justice to all state, county and municipal courts outlining the proper procedure for requesting interpreter service from the Commission, and for

reimbursing the Commission for the service. In this area, also, some problems were encountered in that not all law enforcement agencies have funds earmarked for interpreting service, so problems arise regarding reimbursement for the service. The Department of Probation is a case in example. Although they have deaf offenders on probation, who are, like their non-deaf peers, required to report regularly to their probation officers, the Probation department does not have funds for interpreters. Consequently, the probation officers hesitate to call the Commission for interpreting service when it is needed — despite assurances that the Commission will provide it whether it is reimbursed or not — and, instead, do not require their deaf probationers to report as they should.

Finally, although up to July 1, 1977, the Commission was able to recycle its reimbursements by use of the 9901 account with the Comptroller's office — and thus stretch its interpreting dollar to meet the steadily escalating increase in demand for the service, the agency has been notified by Finance and Control that special permission will have to be obtained to continue this, as reimbursements should go back into the General Fund instead of being returned to the agency's budget for reallocation. Unless this permission is forthcoming, in view of the steadily escalating demand for interpreting service, it is likely that the agency will be faced with requesting a deficiency appropriation to meet its fiscal needs during the last few months of the 1977-78 fiscal year.

COUNSELING AND REFERRAL SERVICE

Counseling and referral services also showed a sharp increase in both number of clients served (72.8 per cent) and number of services provided (101.5 per cent). It is likely that the actual increase was larger than the figures show, for the counseling department was so understaffed that the director of counseling

services had to assume part of the caseload himself and thus had little time in which to develop a system of record keeping that would reflect the actual volume of work performed on behalf of the clients. In fact, the staff was so overworked that routine follow-up on cases was simply not possible because most of the staff time had to be spent dealing with the influx of clients needing immediate help or crisis intervention. With a caseload of nearly 500 clients per professional staff member, it is understandable that the agency desperately needs counselors both in the direct counseling and in the job program departments. Helping somewhat were the services of a volunteer counselor (who will be added to the full time staff in September, 1977) as well as one of its part-time staff (who happened to have training and experience in counseling deaf people), who was drafted into working two days a week to help alleviate the crushing burden borne by the full time staff. Also welcomed for the summer (1977) months were two counseling intern-trainees (although this added the burden of supervising them to the already massive load the more experienced staff were carrying). Added to the problem was the resignation in June, 1977, of the director of counseling who left to take a much higher paying position in Washington, D. C.

As was mentioned earlier, crisis intervention and immediate problem solving for clients formed the bulk of the work the agency counseling staff was called upon to perform, followed by personal and family counseling. (The job program will be discussed later in this report.) In many cases, also, the work of the staff included educating and preparing other agencies and personnel in dealing with the special needs of hearing handicapped individuals when referrals were made.

A recent survey conducted by the Department of Mental Health uncovered 137 hearing handicapped persons in the state's mental facilities, most of whom are

receiving inadequate or no treatment due to the communication difficulty they pose for the institution staff. To quote the person conducting the survey, it is only by lucky happenstance rather than deliberate treatment planning when someone is found within the institution who can communicate with hearing handicapped patients. The Commission has been providing some of the mental health facilities with assistance in solving communication problems — but again this assistance is generally provided only when the agency has become aware of the case either by having referred the client to the institution itself, or having been asked to provide the assistance by the client's family.

Two needs have been identified with respect to the matters mentioned in the preceding paragraph: One is for a mental health program, preferably one with both inpatient and outpatient facilities and services for hearing handicapped individuals, and the other is for a halfway house for hearing handicapped persons. In many instances, hearing handicapped patients in institutions who are ready for release but not quite ready for independent living must remain in the institutions because there is no place for them to go which will enable them to gradually pick up the threads of their lives again. In addition, many patients who have spent most of their lives in mental institutions simply because no one knew what to do with them could be released if there were a controlled environment in which they could be prepared for entry into the community. Both the mental health program and the halfway house would need to be staffed by persons skilled in communicating with the hearing handicapped as well as trained in dealing with their unique problems.

Another area in which the counseling department has become increasingly involved is that of counseling students and their families. An increasing number of school systems throughout the state are requesting counseling for their

hearing impaired students, many of whom are of Hispanic extraction, and whose families do not speak English. The volunteer counselor mentioned earlier is of immense help in this, as she is of Hispanic background, and can communicate with both deaf and hearing people in English, Spanish, and in sign language, and will shortly be added to the agency's full time staff.

Numerous contacts also were received from or about persons who have recently lost their hearing, or who are losing their hearing as a result of aging. A group program was initiated to help these people deal with the difficult problem of the onset of hearing loss occurring at an adult age.

The direct counseling staff also worked closely with the job program staff in counseling clients whose problems were not directly work-related, but which affected their work performance or employability.

While the agency has available to it five rent-free satellite offices (courtesy of Bell Telephone Company and the United Cerebral Palsy Association) scattered around the state, staffing of these offices was on an appointment-only basis, as the agency simply did not have enough staff to man the field offices on a regular basis without leaving the main office in Hartford understaffed. This has caused the agency to receive some criticism from deaf people in other parts of the state — who would like to be able to walk in for on-the-spot assistance as the Hartford area residents are able to do. In addition, many of the low income hearing handicapped do not have TTYs to call for an appointment, nor do they have transportation to Hartford. Again, additional counselors on the staff would go a long way toward alleviating this problem, both by permitting a reduction in the tremendous caseloads carried by present staff, and making it possible to man the field offices on a regular basis to take care of both long-term counseling clients by appointment, and to assist those who drop in unannounced

and need immediate assistance. In addition, it would make it possible for the agency to devote some staff time to much needed follow-up on clients it has already served although sporadic spot checks have indicated a high degree of satisfaction to date with the services provided.

JOB DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM

In September, 1976, a special supplementary appropriation was received which enabled the agency to save its job development and placement program (which had been funded under a special discretionary CETA grant which was reduced on October 1, 1976, and subsequently terminated on January 1, 1977). EEA funds were made available to keep the program typist on the staff, while the General Fund appropriation was used to place the two other job program staff members in permanent positions as well as to hire a desperately needed fiscal officer. A total of 2014 services were provided to clients by the job program staff, an increase of 38.9 per cent over 1975-76. Most of the clients needed counseling either on selection of a career (or a new career in the case of those laid off or whose jobs were phased out by modern technological changes), or on how to handle on-the-job frictions, etc. Communication problems were the most common source of on-the-job problems, with misunderstandings between employee and supervisors being a common occurrence. In 115 of the cases, the problems were severe enough to have placed the deaf person's job in jeopardy, and it is significant that in only seven of the cases (involving only four clients) were the job program staff unsuccessful in resolving the problem to everyone's satisfaction. (One client, however, was fired from four successive jobs despite the efforts of the job program staff — but he was an unusual case.)

The passage of Public Act 77-458 which requires that employers and unions

in the private sector provide deaf employees with interpreters from the Commission any time the employee is involved in a grievance proceeding will benefit the Commission's clients — and the agency as well — in that the deaf person's right to grieve and be understood will be protected, and the agency's interpreters will be called in to facilitate communication before misunderstandings have a chance to escalate to the point where both parties harden in their stance and successful resolution becomes difficult.

Placement of deaf clients on jobs continued to be an extremely difficult and challenging task although some noteworthy breakthroughs were made among companies that had not previously employed hearing handicapped persons. For example, two clients were placed with Kingfisher Corporation, and the management was so pleased with their performance that it subsequently requested and hired two more. Despite the difficulties, however, a total of 81 hearing handicapped persons were placed on jobs, for an average of 6.6 per month.

In addition, more and more companies were beginning to become aware of the Commission's services, and requested interpreters from the agency any time they wished to inform their hearing handicapped employees about their company benefits, retirement plans, changes in policy, and the like. An increasing number of unions, also, began requesting interpreters for union meetings as well as discussions with individual members with respect to possible and/or actual grievances. Another trend was noted in that deaf employees are becoming more aware of their rights as employees, and are beginning to reject amateur "interpreters" (usually fellow employees who have learned a little sign language) and demanding professionally qualified interpreters from the Commission any time their job rights are involved.

Another problem area encountered by the job program staff was the difficulty

of locating openings for clients in areas outside of the Hartford area. This difficulty was compounded by the decision of the Commissioner of Labor to remove the Microfische equipment (and its listings of vacancies in the Job Bank) from all state agencies other than Connecticut State Employment Service (CSES) offices. The decision forced the job program staff to travel to CSES offices (after persuading the supervisors at CSES to allow them to use their microfische) to copy down vacancies in order to refer the clients to the employers — instead of having the information available right on the premises of the Commission. Again, lack of staff to man the field offices (and make connections with CSES supervisors in other areas so they could use the microfische in their offices) hampered the agency in doing as effective a job as would be possible for clients living outside the Greater Hartford area.

OTHER SERVICES

The Commission handled 19,170 telephone calls in '76-'77, most of which were of the information and referral variety, for an average of nearly 1,600 per month. This was an increase of 30.9 per cent over the previous year, but it is likely that the increase would have been even greater had there been more telephone lines available to the agency. Time and again, the agency received complaints from individuals who had been unable to get through to the agency because all of its three lines were tied up. Another problem in this area was that many hearing handicapped clients could not afford toll calls to the Hartford office; agency interpreters calling from the place of their assignment had to make toll calls to request assistance in difficult cases or to check on their next assignments if such places of assignment were outside of Hartford; and, last but not least, it was discovered that officers arresting deaf individuals

had to get special permission to make toll calls to request interpreters if the arrest (or accident, or whatever) took place outside of Hartford's toll-free zone. A solution may be forthcoming shortly, however, as the agency is being "plugged into" the Governor's State Information Bureau's (GSIB) 800 line. Callers from out of the Hartford area will be able to call the GSIB number and ask to be connected to the Commission. The call will then be transferred to this agency.

The Commission staff assisted in planning and obtaining a Title XX grant for Converse Communications Center (CCC) through the Department of Social Services. The 1977-78 budget appropriated for the agency included \$15,000 for CCC, and this will be used as the 25% matching funds for the Title XX grant. CCC will become an affiliate of the state Infoline, thus opening up all of Infoline's services to deaf TTY-users. (For a description of CCC and the TTY message relay service, please see Vol. XXX, Digest of Connecticut Administrative Reports to the Governor for 1975-76, Page 314.)

In cooperation with the Department of Health, the Commission also provided interpreters for several regional Swine Flu clinics before the program was terminated, thus enabling deaf persons seeking shots to have someone to interpret the instructions and any questions asked.

Assistance was also provided by the Commission to the Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf in obtaining a Title VI CETA grant to set up some community services (Adult and Continuing Education classes, coordination of services and activities for deaf senior citizens, recreation and cultural activities, etc.) not presently available to deaf citizens.

The agency is also working closely with several state and outside agencies and organizations to set up such things as training for Hearing Ear Dogs for deaf

people (required by Sec. 22-346a of the CGS); obtain reduction in cost of toll calls for TTY- users in Connecticut; assistance in implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and to help monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals (WHCHI), the executive director having been a delegate to WHCHI in May, 1977.

The agency also helped organize and sponsor several workshops on improving service delivery to the hearing handicapped, one of which was a workshop for the six New England states in which legislators, agency heads, deaf consumers, parents, and professionals were brought together to share ideas and experiences on how each state could best serve their hearing handicapped citizens. It is worth pointing out that at the end of this particular conference, four of the five other state representatives voted to go back to their own states and immediately begin planning to set up a commission modeled on the Connecticut State Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (the fifth already had an Office on Deafness, but, although it has been in existence longer than this Commission, it has not yet been able to get off the ground — primarily because it is buried in a much larger agency, and cannot seem to cut through the miles of red tape in which it is snarled).

A follow-up workshop was held subsequent to the one described above, this one for Connecticut agencies and consumers. The departments of Consumer Protection, Mental Health, Aging, and Adult and Continuing Education were invited to present a panel discussion of how their departments were serving hearing handicapped, and to receive suggestions from professionals and consumers on needed programs in their areas. Many benefits have or will accrue to the state's hearing handicapped citizens as a result of the discussions that took place at this workshop. The Department of Consumer Protection, in particular, has been vigorously working

toward meeting some of the needs identified at the workshop, and has been tremendously helpful to this Commission ever since that initial contact at the workshop.

It should also be mentioned at this point that the Commission has also received much help and cooperation from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the departments of Social Services, Health, Finance and Control, Fiscal Analysis, and Personnel. Governor Grasso too, and her administrative assistants have also proved to be very responsive to the needs of the hearing handicapped, as have many legislators. This has been one of the key factors in the rapid growth of the agency and its services, and it is to be hoped that the climate of cooperation and mutual assistance will continue to thrive and expand.

SUMMARY

To summarize, the agency has, in its three years of existence, gained a nationwide reputation for service delivery to hearing handicapped that cannot be matched by any other state. It offers state-wide interpreting service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It offers counseling and referral services, job development and placement services, advocacy, and information and referral. It works closely and cooperatively with other state agencies to resolve problems, plan programs, and, in general, makes every effort to meet the needs of the hearing handicapped whenever they are identified, through its own resources as well as by utilizing other state, county, municipal, or private resources. It has actively sponsored legislation which would result in more equitable benefits for hearing handicapped citizens than has been possible in the past; and has opposed legislation which it felt would negatively affect either the agency itself or its clientele.

It remains to be seen how the newly passed Act Concerning the Reorganization of the Executive Branch of the Government will affect the agency's ability to continue to provide fast, effective and innovative services to the state's hearing handicapped citizens, for one of the reasons why the agency was able to build its services from zero in 1974 to its present status as the "model" for other states desiring the same services for their hearing handicapped has been the agency's autonomous status. Bureaucratic red tape, while always a minor, nagging hindrance, did not significantly slow down the agency's growth, nor its demonstrated ability to provide service despite a chronic shortage of staff that became more and more acute as the demand for its services doubled, tripled and quadrupled as time went by.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

The affirmative action plan of the Commission has been submitted in working draft form, and is undergoing study and revision by the Commission's Personnel subcommittee. The draft articulates a policy statement calling upon both appointed commissioners, and agency staff members "to abide by, to perform in accordance with, and to implement in all feasible agency operations a vigorous, strong, dynamic, and assertive equal employment opportunity program in job applicant development, recruitment, and employment as well as in employee training, development, promotion, and professional improvement." The policy further specifies that such a program shall be directed toward "... population groups which have been ... excluded by convention, tradition, or indifference from job, employment, and professional opportunities by reason of race, sex, color, ethnic origins, religion, national origin, ancestry, age physical disability, criminal record, or mental disorder." The program makes clear that the Commission views handicapped persons as comprising another appropriately protected group, in addi-

tion to black persons, Hispanic persons, and women. The current findings with regard to the composition of this agency's relatively small staff are that the Commission has a good-to-strong performance in that it has a deaf woman as chief administrator, had a deaf, black director of counseling, several female professional staff, one Hispanic female professional (hired 9/1/77) and a part-time black female aide. The agency is vigorously searching for black and Hispanic Counselors as well as interpreters for its staff, for the need for this type is acute. When the agency's director of counseling resigned in late June, the agency attempted to recruit another qualified, deaf black male for the position, but unfortunately the only qualified candidate was already making more money than the agency's executive director.) If any criticism could be leveled at the agency, it would be that there is a preponderance of females and not enough males. (A full-time male interpreter is badly needed, to take emergency assignments in depressed areas where female interpreters hesitate to venture.)